and the salt thereof, wherein

M is a hydrogen atom, an ammonium ion, a monovalent metal ion or an equivalent of a divalent metal ion of the groups Ia, IIa, IIb, IVa or VIIIb of the Periodic Table of the Elements;

R^1 is OH [or NR^4R^5, wherein R^4 and R^5 independently of one another are H or C_1-C_6-alkyl];

R^2 is H or an alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl or aryl group, wherein the alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, and aryl group are unsubstituted or substituted with 1, 2 or 3 substituents which are chosen independently of one another from C_1-C_6-alkyl, OH, O-C_1-C_6-alkyl, halogen and CF_3; and

R^3 is COOM[, SO_3M, COR^4, $CONR^4R^5$] or $COOR^4$; and [or

R^3 is H, provided that when R^3 is H R^2 is unsubstituted aryl or aryl substituted with 1, 2 or 3 substituents which are chosen independently of one another from C_1-C_6-alkyl, OH, O-C_1-C_6-alkyl, halogen and CF_3.]

R^4 and R^5 independently of one another are H or C_1-C_6 alkyl.

5. (Twice Amended) The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein R^3 is COOM [or $COOR^4$].

6. (Twice Amended) The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein

M is an alkali metal ion or an equivalent of an alkaline earth metal ion or zinc ion;

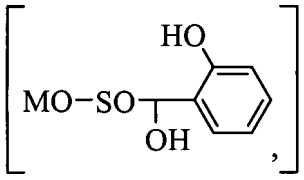
and

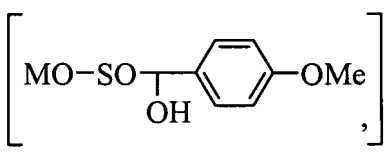
[R^1 is OH or NH_2];

R^2 is H or alkyl[; and

R^3 is COOM or $COOR^4$, wherein R^4 is H or C_1-C_6-alkyl].

10. (Twice Amended) A compound of the formulae:





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